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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

THE LITTLE CORNER NEVER CONQUERED. By John van Schaick, Jr.
New York: The Macmillan Company.

The War Council of the American Red Cross first sent a commission to Europe in June, 1917, with Grayson M. P. Murphy, a successful New York banker, who had shortly before been commissioned as Major in the United States Reserve Corps and placed on General Pershing's Staff, at its head. One of the most noteworthy facts about the non-military war-work seems to have been that the very ablest civilians in the country were needed for such duties and were assigned to them. The versatile American business man, requisitioned for unfamiliar service under strange conditions, cheerfully rolled up his shirtsleeves, plunged into the maelstrom of conflicting organizations, foreign politics, and red tape, and by virtue of his tact, efficiency, and tireless labor, energized the whole mass. Of course, the American official, in whatever branch of service he might be, was in an especially favorable position for influencing the course of events. As representing the country looked upon as the savior of the hard-pressed Allies, he naturally called forth all the unselfishness and courtesy of the devoted Englishmen and Frenchmen with whom he worked. But in general he seems to have made extraordinarily good use of his opportunity.

Major Murphy was no exception to this rule. His policy, from the first, was to coöperate with existing organizations, to avoid conflicts and duplications, to be universally and systematically helpful. "Remember," he said to his staff, "that these people who have been doing relief work in Europe since the beginning of the war know a lot more about it than we do. Play the game with them. . . . We have to remember that these people over there are very tired and very sensitive. I want you to pocket your pride and not get into arguments. . . . If a Red Cross man is high and mighty with a single hotel waiter, he will hurt the whole Red Cross. . . . I don't know a thing about it. I've got to depend on you fellows to put it over."

On August 20, Major Murphy directed that a department for Belgium be organized. The head of this department, which was soon turned into an independent commission, was the able and devoted Colonel Ernest P. Bicknell, and the assistant chief was John van Schaick, Jr., the author of this book. The new commission had its headquarters at Le Havre, the seat of the Belgian Government, which exercised authority over that little corner of Belgium which was never conquered. The book thus gives a valuable view of what was in many ways the most interesting portion of the front, supplementing what we know of occupied Belgium during the war.

The statistics of what the commission accomplished are in themselves impressive. The work of military relief alone included the establishment, equipment, and maintenance of hospitals, canteens, and centers of recreation; the provision of rest areas for Belgian nurses; supplies for hospitals and canteens; gifts and extra comforts for soldiers; and cash donations to hospital, canteen, and recreational organizations. Considerably over a million dollars was spent in these ways. In addition to this, upwards of \$364,000 was expended upon civil hospitals. An especially fascinating story is that of the relief of the children—an account varied by many personal narratives. To this work the sum of \$1,159,553 was devoted. The organization of the relief of refugees—a work having many pathetic and inspiring aspects—was difficult and laborious. It comprised the removal of refugees from dangerous or congested areas; provision of housing, relief supplies and medical service; improvement of living conditions; clothing for discharged Belgian soldiers; assistance to returning refugees; and contributions to other organizations and to the Belgian Government for relief activities. The expenditure in this case was about a million and a half. For general supervision, a little over \$93,000 was spent. The grand total for relief work in Belgium amounted to \$4,327,089. Never interfering, always ready in its response to the most diverse demands, the Belgian Commission had a hand in every sort of relief work and ensured its success.

Besides giving a comprehensive report of the work of the commission, the author presents somewhat lifelike sketches of notable personalities—notably of the noble King and Queen of Belgium and of the energetic and original Dr. Antoine De Page, the man who made the famous Ocean Hospital. It is to pages like these that historians of the future will turn when they wish to distinguish the facts of character from myth and popular tradition.

RANDOM MEMORIES. By Ernest Wadsworth Longfellow. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

There is much in these pleasant reminiscences to make one think of the author of *Evangeline* and *Hiawatha*—a sort of unimpassioned love of nature and art and humankind, a charm closely allied to moderation and sanity. There is nothing very remarkable in the book, nothing commonplace. It satisfies one continually because it all seems to be so natural and adequate an expression of personality. One is in the society of a friend who has nothing to conceal, relates everything with a touch of appreciation and with more than a touch of good sense, withholds nothing except through the fear of becoming tiresome, and does not try to hide even his limitations. The book makes one feel that one has had a good talk with the author. No literary mannerisms have come between. The absence of a confidential tone increases one's confidence. It is agreeable thus to deal with a personality that has no secrets, no poses, no particular desire to impress, and which for these reasons does impress